

a comprehensive strategy to enable people with all types of disabilities to obtain and sustain competitive employment in our Nation's thriving economy. Men and women with disabilities have much to offer, and their energy, creativity, and hard work can greatly strengthen our Nation and our economy. As we observe White Cane Safety Day and acknowledge the importance of the white cane as an instrument of personal freedom, let us reaffirm our determination to ensure equal opportunity for every American, including people who are blind or visually impaired.

To honor the many achievements of blind and visually impaired citizens and to recognize the white cane's significance in advancing independence, the Congress, by joint resolution approved October 6, 1964, has designated October 15 of each year as "White Cane Safety Day."

NOW, THEREFORE, I, WILLIAM J. CLINTON, President of the United States of America, do hereby proclaim October 15, 1998, as White Cane Safety Day. I call upon the people of the United States, government officials, educators, and business leaders to observe this day with appropriate programs, ceremonies, and activities.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this fifteenth day of October, in the year of our Lord nineteen hundred and ninety-eight, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and twenty-third.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

Proclamation 7141 of October 16, 1998

National Character Counts Week, 1998

*By the President of the United States of America
A Proclamation*

As Americans, we are a people full of hope, confident in our capacity to make life better for ourselves and others. We look forward to the promise of the future, and we have high goals for the 21st century: to remain the world's leading force for peace, freedom, prosperity, and security; to keep the American Dream alive for everyone willing to work for it; to come together across lines of race, religion, and other individual differences to become one America. But everything we hope to accomplish depends, as it always has, on the hearts and minds of the American people.

One of the greatest building blocks of character is citizen service. We must do more as individuals and as a society to encourage all Americans—especially our young people—to share their time, skills, enthusiasm, and energy with their communities. Whether we teach children to read, mentor young people, work at a food bank or homeless shelter, or care for people living with AIDS, citizen service calls forth the best from each of us. It builds a sense of community, compassion, acceptance of others, and a willingness to do the right thing—all hallmarks of character.

We can take great pride today in the numbers of energetic, idealistic Americans who are participating in service activities across our country and around the world. Almost 90,000 young men and women have served their

communities through AmeriCorps during the past 4 years, tutoring students, mentoring children, building homes, fighting drug abuse. Through our America Reads initiative, Americans of all ages are volunteering their time to help children learn to read independently by the end of the third grade. Through Learn and Serve America, the Corporation for National and Community Service encourages America's schools to add service learning to their curricula so that all students—from kindergarten through graduate school—can develop their character, skills, and self-confidence while making their own unique contributions to the life of their communities. In the National Senior Service Corps and the Peace Corps, in religious, school, community, and charitable organizations, Americans strengthen the character of our Nation by volunteering to improve the quality of life for their fellow human beings. During National Character Counts Week, let us reaffirm to our children that the future belongs to those who have the strength of character to live a life of service to others.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, WILLIAM J. CLINTON, President of the United States of America, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution and laws of the United States, do hereby proclaim October 18 through October 24, 1998, as National Character Counts Week. I call upon the people of the United States, government officials, educators, religious, community, and business leaders, and the States to commemorate this week with appropriate ceremonies, activities, and programs.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this sixteenth day of October, in the year of our Lord nineteen hundred and ninety-eight, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and twenty-third.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

Proclamation 7142 of October 16, 1998

National Forest Products Week, 1998

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

Our Nation has been blessed with abundant natural resources, and among the most precious of these are our forests. Because forests cover about one-third of the land area of the United States, their splendor is not limited to one region, but is shared by our entire country. All Americans can experience the variety and beauty of our forests, parks, and woodlands and share the joys of hiking, camping, bird watching, and other recreational activities. Likewise, all Americans benefit from the essentials for life that forests provide: clean water, clean air, soil stability, pollution reduction, and a rich habitat for plants and animals. Forests also supply us with products vital to our society and economy, from building materials to paper products to medicines.

Maintaining the health of our Nation's forests is an important and delicate task. As we continue to grow, both in terms of population and in land developed, we put increased pressure on our forests and woodland areas. In the past, such growth occurred without regard to its impact and often